



January 2009

Professionalism  
Preparedness  
Community  
Dedication  
Unity

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## Strategic Planning Sessions

### Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning is alive and well in the Department. Since April 2008, a group of approximately 50 Department employees from all operational units have been meeting on a monthly basis to implement Strategic Planning. Chief Thiel is quick to point out that Strategic Planning within the Department is not about producing a plan that gathers dust on a shelf. The Chief quotes President and Army General Dwight D. Eisenhower who said: "In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable." Strategic Planning in the Department

will be a continuous process that will help us to direct internal change and to manage external change.

The Department's Strategic Planning efforts have to date focused on defining the *Vision* for the Department, i.e., how do we see ourselves now and in the future; the *Mission* of the Department, i.e., what products and services do we provide; and the *Values* of the Department, i.e., what do we stand for as an organization and as individuals within that organization? Department employees were solicited for their input on the statements.

The Strategic Planning Team also defined five Focus Areas: Accountability; Community Engagement; Prevention, Health, and Safety; Professionalism; and Readiness and Infrastructure. All planning efforts and all activities will be formulated and executed within the Focus Area structures. Five Focus Area Strategic Teams (*FAST Teams*) were created and include Strategic Planning Team members and members of our employee representation groups. Each Team is led by a member of the Department's Leadership Team.

At the January 23, 2009 Strategic Planning meeting, the Team confirmed Vision and Values statements for the Department and Goals for each of the Focus Areas. The Vision and Values state-

incident pictures (Hot Shots), Awards and Recognition; and a section focusing on an employee titled Spot light.

Suggestions for the newsletter are welcomed. Anyone who would like to submit incident photos or an article for publication, please send them to Captain Santano by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. Articles should be informative and of a positive nature. The newsletter will be posted on the Fire Department web site.

### Focus Areas



ments are planned to be used throughout the Department, e.g., on apparatus, stationary, publications, belt buckles, etc. More importantly, Department employees will be evaluated based on their adherence to the statements. (Refer to the box above left)

The FAST Teams also identified four actions for immediate implementation that will support and

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Dedicated to our Community, our Profession and Each Other

???????

## Cross Fit



Noelle Whitehead



**Ok**, what is all the jabberwocky about Safety Culture? Why are people talking about changing the Safety Culture if I don't know what it is? Better yet, what does the Safety Culture have to do with me?

Let's explore what Safety Culture is and the impact it has on everything you do in the workplace as well as away from work.

Culture simply implies past practices, past methods, or ways you are accustomed to doing something. One term

**On Wednesday**, December 17, the Professional Development Center hosted a Cross Fit team building obstacle course at the Alexandria Sanitation Authority. All Fire Department personnel were encouraged to attend the event. Participants included the Fire Chief, EMS and Suppression personnel as well as Administrative staff. Three person teams were formed to negotiate a six-station obstacle course. Personnel from different divisions formed three person teams; in some cases, Cross Fit instructors were so enthusiastic that they completed the obstacle course

multiple times as members of different teams. The six-stations included 1) 250-meter row; 2) 10-push ups; 3) 10 pull-ups; 4) 20 sit-ups; 5) 10 box jumps; and 6) transferring a total of 1030 lbs from one point to another. The quickest recorded time for completing the course was posted by team members Adam Thiel, Pat Evans and Anthony Kelly.

More team building events are planned. To date a total of twenty-five percent of our members have participated in the Cross Fit program. The number of avail-

able workouts has increased from four to over 20. Cross Fit programs, including the program of the day, can be downloaded from the Cross Fit web site, [www.crossfit.com](http://www.crossfit.com) Those wishing additional information can contact the following Department Cross Fit instructors: Chet Helms, Craig Youngdale, Pat Evans, Josh Weisman, Mike Perry, Brian Meckes, Darryl Stanton, Warner Sherman, Gregg Cook, Mike Lynn, Wayne Bryant, and Thurston McClain

## Health and Safety

that sums it up is "history", how we have done things previously.

Well, what's so wrong with the way we have done something before? Good insight. Not all past practices or "culture" are necessarily bad or wrong. In basic terms we're referring to a *footprint* of where we have been. Safety culture may be referred to the way we act or behave as it relates to pretty much everything we do, either at home or in the workplace.

Identifying your current level of safety culture is important in order to determine where you are in the scheme of things and how to move forward in a positive manner. We all want to move forward, either on an organizational level or individual personal level. Moving forward can be as general as having a day "injury free" or as complex as setting performance indicators for cultural shift of safety attitudes.

How does one's home safety culture play a role in the workplace safety culture? Building connections between home and work are visible in tasks such as seat belt use. If you never use your seat belt in your personal ve-

hicle you're less likely to use your seat belt while at work regardless of the "law" on seat belt use. It must be a conscious effort, practiced and then reinforced daily. If you never do it at home or away from the workplace you may not see the connection or value of buckling up! It must be fully integrated in your activity to be effective.

Without the right safety culture we, as Department employees, can't deliver superior service, reduce cost and offer the quality product we value caring and compassionate service delivery'. So the next time you hear the word "Safety Culture" consider what you can do to make a positive impact on the Department's safety culture. When it comes to safety become an obstacle remover and a motivator.

*Submitted by Troy Jennene Gibbs*



## Toys Toys Toys

### TOYS FOR TOTS



**U.S. MARINE CORPS RESERVE**

For more information visit [www.toysfortots.org](http://www.toysfortots.org)

Printing donated by Wells Fargo Financial, proud sponsor of the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation

Community outreach efforts had a special meaning for many children during the month of December. The Black Fire Service Professionals of Alexandria (BFSPA), the Alexandria Fire Department Children's Holiday Toy Drive and the Marine Corp's Toys for Tots campaign collected hundreds of toys for children of all ages. The accomplishment was enormous, given the

current fiscal environment.

The BFSPA hosted their eighth annual toy party at the Mark Center Hilton, Saturday, December 20, 2008. Fire Chief Adam K. Thiel, Mayor Bill Euille and 150 children and their families, attended the toy party. Santa (John Morehead III), Spiderman, Elmo and Alexandria's Hot Topic All Stars cheerleading group, were on hand to ensure all children enjoyed the holiday festivities. Toys and gifts were distributed to the all children that attended; in addition, a special drawing was held to give away two brand new bicycles.

Now retired Captain Paul Scaffido founded the Alexandria Fire Department Children's Holiday Toy drive in 1989. The Toy Drive was founded to insure children in the Pediatric Unit of Alexandria Inova Hospital had a toy to open on Christmas day. Mike Chandler has continued Paul's efforts for the last eight years. On hand at the Pediatric Unit to help distribute toys were Santa (Paramedic Dave Fox) and Fire Chief Adam K. Thiel. The Children's Holiday Toy drive also donated new toys and books to the Alive Children Development Center and The

Alexandria Women's and Children's Shelter.

The Marine Corp's Toys for Tots campaign concluded on Tuesday, December 24. The Department collected around 1,520 toys between November 18 and December 24. Station 204 received an additional ten bags of toys after the cut-off date that were delivered to Children's Hospital Medical Center as part of the final push, where collectively Fire Departments from the Region performed their final drop off. Lieutenant Cook and members of Lightning Patrol Webelos Pack 867 managed the pick up and transfer of toys to a storage bin at the PDC. Congratulations to Members of the BFSPA, Mike Chandler, and all Department personnel who assisted with the Toys for Tots Campaign. The efforts and generosity of Department personnel helped to make this Christmas a wonderful one for some of the Children in the City of Alexandria.

## Spotlight



**Assistant Fire Marshal Bill Coates**

Bill was born in Washington, DC and spent most of his life in Northeast DC. He is the oldest of seven children raised in a single parent household. He was compelled to start work at age twelve as a stock boy for Western Auto Stores to help his mother and

siblings. In 1971, he began his fire department career as a volunteer on engine 42 in Oxon Hill, MD

Bill started his employment with the City on September 2, 1992 as an Existing Structures Inspector. Prior to City employment, he worked for the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department for 12 years, as an EMT, Fire Fighter, Fire Marshal and Fire Investigator.

He progressed from Existing Structures to New Construction as a Mechanical Inspector and later as New Construction Supervisor, with certifications in Building, Fire, Plumbing and Electrical Inspections. He left the City in October 2002 to pursue a position as Pastor in Walterboro, SC for the United House of Prayer Church.

He rejoined the City in July 2005, and was promoted to Assistant Fire Marshal in July 2006. He obtained the certification as a Fire Official. In 2005 Fire Chief Gary Mesaris appointed Bill to the position of Fire Chaplain.

Bill and his wife Sherri share a happy union. They have six grown children and thirteen grandchildren. Hobbies include being an ordained Minister, traveling, scuba diving, and being the Fire Chaplain. He is pursuing a BA in Business Administration at Baker Online College of Flint, Michigan with a current 3.7 GPA.

## Awards and Recognition



**Appointed to the National Fire Academy Board of Visitors**

**Chief Thiel** has been appointed to the National Fire Academy Board of Visitors (NFA BOV). The Board of Visitors plays an important role in enhancing the academic stature of NFA. Functions of the Board are to examine: Academy programs to determine whether these programs further the basic missions which are approved by the FEMA Administrator;

the physical plant of the Academy to determine the adequacy of the Academy facilities; and to examine funding levels for the Academy programs. Members of the Board of Visitors are selected from professionals in the fields of fire safety, fire prevention, education and training, fire control, research and development in fire protection, treatment and rehabilitation of fire victims, or local government services management, and from such professional organizations as will ensure a balanced representation of fire and emergency services interests.



**Appointed to the National Advisory**

**Assistant Chief Pouget** was recently appointed to the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH). NACOSH was established to advise the Secretaries of Labor, and Health and Human Services on occupational safety and health programs and policies. The 12-member NACOSH has two members representing management,

two members representing labor, two members representing the occupational health professions, two members representing the occupational safety professions and four members representing the public. Members of the 12-person advisory

committee are chosen on the basis of their knowledge and experience in occupational safety and health. Appointment of these members is by the Secretary of Labor. Members serve two-year terms.

## Star of Life Competition

**Alexandria Fire and EMS Paramedics** Matthew Strauss, Jason Cage and Medic Michael Gerber placed third in the Virginia Stars of Life Championship competition on Thursday, November 13, 2008. The Championship competition was part of the Virginia EMS Symposium held in Norfolk, Virginia. The Symposium offered over 240 classes taught by instructors from around the country.

The Stars of Life Championship was an exciting, fast action, ques-

tion and answer tournament that tested EMS professionals' knowledge and speed. Competition format was head to head, three person teams playing for a big trophy and bragging rights. The tournament was bracket style, single elimination with seeding determined by preliminary matches (two preliminary and at least one championship bracket match). Questions were based on EMS trivia, Anatomy and Physiology, textbooks and other resources as well as knowledge of Advance Life Support (ALS), Basic Life Support (BLS), scene safety and situational awareness.



(left to right) are the contest's emcee Bob Page, Paramedic Matthew Strauss, Medic Michael Gerber and

The three-hour Virginia State competition was very competitive and attracted teams from around the Commonwealth.

*Submitted by Brian Hricik*

## Congratulations to:

**Donny Webber:** Began his career with the Department on October 14, 1975 and retired on December 31, 2008

**Jeff Hamke :** Began his career with the Department on December 3, 1979 and retired on December 31, 2008

**Leroy Smith:** Began his career with the Department on September 5, 2001 and retired on December 26, 2008

## Strategic Planning Sessions

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promote the Department's Vision, Values, and Focus Area Goals. Task Forces will be established to develop plans and to deliver results during a two-day Strategic Planning Advance (or Retreat) scheduled for late February 2009. Task Forces will be led by members of the Focus Area Teams but will also include employees nominated from throughout the Department who have expertise and experience in the selected action areas. It is anticipated that within the next 12 to 18 months, each Department employee will have had an opportunity to serve on a Task Force.

Do expect more news on Strategic Planning in the future, especially as plans proceed from concept to

reality. A collaboration website will be established shortly in which Strategic Planning information will be made available. If any employee is interested in participating in the Strategic Planning process or wants to learn more about Strategic Planning, please contact Jim Lynch, Administrative Service Chief.

### Vision Statement:

*Dedicated to our Community,  
Our Profession and Each Other*

### Core Values:

- Professionalism
- Preparedness
- Community
- Dedication
- Unity

### FAST Team Goals:

**Accountability**-- Ensure organizational accountability through empowerment, integrity, and transparency with the highest ethical standards.

**Community Engagement**-- Ensure a partnership by informing, educating, and engaging the community, our co-workers, and other city agencies to further our mission.

**Prevention, Health & Safety**-- Enhance the Safety, Health and Wellness of all our members and the community we serve.

**Professionalism**--Raise and maintain our level of professionalism to ensure quality customer service.

**Readiness & Infrastructure**—Provide facilities, equipment and personnel ready to meet the current and changing expectations of those we serve with consistent high-quality service

## Woodrow Wilson Bridge

A FAST Team will be addressing the emergency response challenges facing the Alexandria Fire Department (AFD) with the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge and its new ramps. The FAST Team members represent different sections of the Department and include Brian Hricik, Mike Cross, Leddyanne Dell, Rodney Masser, Mark Dalton, Doug McDaniel, Ashley Ehrhart, Mike Brown and John North. The Team will meet in early February and will address all emergency hazards associated with the Bridge, to include local and thru lane responses, walking path, water supply via land and water, and joint Virginia-Maryland response procedures. Battalion Chiefs Brown and North will be meeting with members of the

Prince George's County Fire and EMS Department to better define the respective roles and responsibilities of the two Departments. As a result of these meetings, a memorandum of understanding will be developed between the two Departments.

Members of the Marine Operations Team (MOT), along with Supervisor Maurice Jones, recently tested the water supply system of the Bridge using Boat 201. Several problems and leaks were found in the system that subsequently required repairs and design changes.

The MOT also identified a need for four inch hose to be added to Boat 201 to properly supply the system from the Potomac River. Logistics is purchasing the needed hose along with necessary hose tools and appliances.

Department personnel will be kept informed as new information is learned about the Bridge and its access ramps.

Please direct any questions or concerns to one of the Team members or to Battalion Chief John North of Special Operations.

*Submitted by Assistant Chief Snead*



## Fire Safety Tips

Heating equipment is a leading cause of home fires during the months of December, January and February. Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, such as the furnace, fireplace, wood stove or portable heater. Only use heating equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory. For more safety tips visit [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)



## HOT SHOTS



1012 King

Overturned vehicle OFF inner-loop



## December 2008 Stats

Results of Going Green  
Competition



COMING SOON!!

FAH calls processed:

911 924

Admin calls:

Incoming 4827

Outgoing 7392

Total calls 13143

	Unit	EMS	SUP	TOTAL	Current Yr	Previous Yr
Station 201	E201	50	103	153	1422	1424
Total		50	103	153	1422	1424
Station 202	E202	45	68	113	1357	1402
	M202	170	21	191	2204	2171
Total		215	89	304	3561	3573
Station 203	E203	54	55	109	1265	1288
	T203	11	69	80	954	1024
Total		65	124	189	2219	2315
Station 204	E204	35	70	105	1319	1323
	T204	8	120	128	1389	1380
Total		43	190	233	2708	2703
Station 205	E205	65	145	210	2127	2132
	M205	195	61	256	2857	2855
Total		260	206	466	4984	4987
Station 206	E206	79	102	181	1974	1959
	M206	184	41	225	2806	2719
	R206	19	31	50	535	448
Total		282	174	456	5315	5126
Station 207	E207	87	103	190	2230	2132
	M207	188	39	227	2469	2371
Total		275	142	417	4699	4503
Station 208	E208	120	134	254	2828	2796
	M208	189	57	246	2877	2896
	T208	22	97	119	1366	1381
Total		331	288	619	7071	7073
Station totals		1521	1316	2837	31,701	31,701